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REMARKS

Entry of this Amendment is proper because it narrows the issues on appeal and does not require further search by the Examiner.

Claims 4-18, 21 and 23-27 are presently pending in this application. Of these, claims 5, 10, 11, 14, 21, 23, and 27 are directed to a non-elected invention and so are considered withdrawn; however, claim 24 is generic, and so upon allowance of claim 24, claims 5, 10, 11, 14, 23, and 27 will also be allowable, as will claims 4, 6-9, 12, 13, 15-18, 21, and 24-26.

Claims 4, 7-9, 18, and 24 have been amended to more particularly define the invention, as have been withdrawn claims 5, 10, 21, and 23.

Claims 4, 6-9, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, and 24-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Buckelew, et al., United States Patent No. 6,498,882. Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Buckelew. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As exemplified by independent claims 7, 21, and 24, Applicant's invention is directed to an optical fiber tape which includes a fiber array adapted to be connected to an optical waveguide, a fixation section, and a tape fiber. The tape fiber includes a plurality of tape sections, each of which comprises a plurality of optical fibers. The tape sections are fixed to the fiber array. The optical fibers are separated at a position between the fiber array and the fixation section and are fixed to the fixation section. The optical fiber tape further includes a rearrangement section for rearranging the optical fibers. The rearrangement section is located at the fixation section or a position near the fixation section.

In one embodiment, exemplified by claim 7, the optical fibers are separated into a

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predetermined number of optical fiber groups which are smaller in number than the plurality of optical fibers and which are fixed to the fixation section.

In a second embodiment, exemplified by claim 21, the optical fibers are separated and arranged parallel to one another and are formed into a tape which is fixed to the fixation section.

As set out in exemplary independent claims 7, 21, and 24, the optical fiber tape includes: (1) a fiber array, (2) a fixation section, (3) a tape fiber including (4) a plurality of tape sections, each of which comprises (5) a plurality of optical fibers, and (6) a rearrangement section. Dependent claims 4 and 5 add (7) a protective tube to their respective parent claims 7 and 21. In rejecting these claims, the Office Action refers to the components described in Buckelew at column 10, line 61 to column 11, line 44 and depicted in Buckelew's Figures 7B and 7C. Per that portion of Buckelew's specification, his optical system 200 comprises (a) a fiber array 220 including (b) an optical device 202 [not identified in Figure 7B], (c) a cable assembly 204 which comprises (d) a ribbonized portion 206, (e) a singulated portion 208, and (f) another ribbonized portion 210. Buckelew's optical device further comprises (g) a transition region 212, (h) a distal cable portion 214 comprised of four individual ribbons each having eight fibers, (i) covers 216 covering portions of fiber array 204, (j) a remaining portion 220, and (k) a strain relief portion 222.

In applying Buckelew's disclosure to the claims of the present application, the Office Action contends that Buckelew has (1) a fiber 200 ((a) above), (2) a fixation section 212 (g), (3) a tape fiber 222 (k) having (4) a plurality of tape sections 206 (d), (5) a plurality of optical fibers (not designated by number in the Office Action, but apparently within singulated

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portion 208) (e), (7) a protective tube 210 (f), and (6) "a rearrangement section near the fixation section." This alleged rearrangement section is not designated by number in the Office Action and can not be identified. It is submitted that Buckelew does not have, and does not suggest, both a fixation section and a rearrangement section as specified in the claims under consideration.

The Office Action applies the above indicated elements (a), (d), (e), (f), (g), and (k) of Buckelew to the claims. This leaves (b) optical device 202, (c) cable assembly 204, (h) distal cable portion 214 comprised of four individual ribbons each having eight fibers, (i) covers 216 covering portions of cable assembly (fiber array) 204, and (j) remaining portion 220. None of these is, or suggests, either a fixation section or a rearrangement section.

If, as the Office Action contends, Buckelew's device has a fixation section, then it lacks a rearrangement section. Alternatively, if Buckelew's device has a rearrangement section, then it lacks a fixation section.

In either event, Buckelew does not anticipate, and does not make obvious, the invention of independent claims 7, 21, and 24, and so these claims are allowable, as are their respective dependent claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 4-18, 21 and 23-27, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are allowable. Since generic claim 24 is allowable, withdrawn claims 5, 10, 11, 14, 23, and 27 are allowable in this same application. Applicant further submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Such action would be appreciated.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance,

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the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

To the extent necessary, Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date:

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